The
COMMONWEAL

VOLUME XXXIII *December 27, 1940* NUMBER 10

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THE COMMONWEAL is indexed in the *Reader's Guide, Catholic Periodical Index* and *Catholic Bookman.*
Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Avenue, New York. Annual Subscription: U. S. and Canada, $5.00; Foreign, $6.00.
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Christmas Trees Underground

THAT the average American cannot grasp the life of the British in air-raid shelters is not because it has not been presented to his imagination. The daily quota of news from overseas deals with it by recital and photograph; magazines feature vivid descriptions of the crowdedness, the casualness, the stoic humor; and several excellent newsreels have marshaled before us every detail of the shelter's communal activities, including communal slumber. But the whole fact and phenomenon still remains somehow unreal to most of us, touches only the periphery of our realization; we are concerned and compassionate, but as though in a dream. This must be because the preparation to receive such impressions is lacking among us—happily for us in every other respect; that preparation probably has to be emotional and direct, not intellectual and second-hand. But when we read that the London Passenger Transport Board trimmed all its stations with Christmas wreaths, that Christmas trees were set up in many shelters, perhaps many of us for the first time authenticate the whole thing as a reality. We have seen people doing in tunnels under the earth almost everything they normally do in their homes, and have not grasped it. But to be told that the Feast of the Home was kept by thousands of families around a tree in some subway station breaks through in a strange way. We remember, in a new framework, the cave in a Palestinian hillside where Those sheltered who found no shelter elsewhere, and it confers a reality on the present scene which nothing else has done.

London Noël

Labor and Defense

A HAZE of emotion from the war issue beclouds the problem of labor in national defense. An ascetic logic could perhaps disentangle considerations of production for national defense from those related to intervention, aid to Britain, isolation and American imperialism, but practically that is almost impossible. On the one hand, propagandists can hardly keep from using the drive for defense production as a means to accelerate all-out American battling in the present war; counter-propagandists quite as naturally utilize difficulties and slowing up of defense production as instruments by which to block the trend to naval, military and air participation in the fight.

Points of Fact and Policy

Defense production involves, however, social, economic and political problems which come before America's foreign policy. A country, after all, wages war or prepares to wage war or simply organizes its war capabilities in a manner which is necessarily close to a direct expression of its domestic social set-up. The United States cannot expect the defense program to go through smoothly and with reassuring certainty and no questions. The last ten years are not wiped out by the call to arms. Inevitably our defense effort reflects the period of uncertainty and transition through which the country had not yet passed when the military crisis was recognized. General Johnson and Mark Sullivan are going to look in vain for a repetition of the kind of industrial accomplishment of the last war. The "free enterprise" system governing the country before the last war is now impossible, for good or evil, or both. The present war situation will not be met by turning over the job as much as was done last time to rugged (however patriotic) individualists who expect to interrupt their régime of *laissez faire* only for the duration. For two things, government is bound to take a bigger directive part all down the line, and organized labor will certainly have a greater hand in planning and in operation.

It shows either great inefficiency or else very poor publicity that the principal question of fact revolves around the actual availability of plant and men. Philip Murray claims that only 30 percent of the 10,000 manufacturing plants that could assist the defense program have actually received contracts from the government. When Mr. Knudsen asks, "Can't we stop this blackout of production from Friday to Monday, and get more out of the equipment?" Mr. Murray refers to 9,000,000

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unemployed and asks his own question, "Can we not stop this idleness, this complete unproductivity, from Monday morning of one week to Monday morning of the next week? When are we going to employ all this man power in our defense program?"

As long as there may be competent unemployed men and useful idle plants, the problem is not one of production but of distribution, and the national defense cry is largely a red herring. Right now there is no agreement upon the availability of men and machines, although it seems inescapable that there are not enough of certain kinds of machines or of certain skills of labor. When it is established that such a situation exists and hinders production—which ought not be as difficult as it seems to be—then wages and hours regulations ought to be skilfully adjusted. The condition would offer no excuse for attacking collective bargaining laws and arrangements, but it would justify altering laws designed primarily to insure spreading the work.

In October, David A. McCabe wrote for THE COMMONWEAL an article on labor standards and defense which grows more and more pertinent. His article showed, among other things, the danger involved in too much "time and a half for overtime." A very short basic work week, blanketed over all grades of labor, and resulting in very much "time and a half" for certain classes of employees would tend to: drive living costs up; push against the health and safety limit of work hours; because of increased cost of living, increase the cost of the defense program; favor with improper partiality the blocs of labor getting the extra over-time wage; reduce the real wages of those workers—generally the unskilled and lower paid—who don't get the over-time. And the present wage laws will more likely prove inadequate than obstructive. They "neither insure a living wage in the present nor an automatic increase in money-wages needed to offset increased living costs in the future." Wage rises resulting from employee pressure are almost sure to favor the better skilled and better paid and better organized workers at the expense of the lower brackets. "Generally speaking, increases in real wages for the better paid will threaten the real wages of the more poorly paid until the latter are raised by government action." The principal labor-industry problem is still to better conditions at the base of the pyramid.

Supreme Court Decision on Water Power

Statism and the Common Good

IN ITS brief flurry in the papers the news about the Court decision in favor of the Federal Power Commission and against the Appalachian Electric Power Company, and representation from 41 States, was focused on the point as to what constitutes navigability in a river. Justice Reed himself, in delivering the majority opinion, told of government boats of 2 to 3 foot draft that had sailed over various reaches of the New River (Virginia-West Virginia), the stream in question in the case. Judging from the press versions the minority opinion of Justices McReynolds and Roberts primarily opposed the argument that a stream, which through expenditure could be made navigable, can in fact be deemed navigable, as the term is construed in American common law, before the necessary improvements are made. Yet what the majority opinion has to say on that score seems of secondary importance when placed beside the consideration of what may develop from the decision that the authority of the United States government in "the regulation of commerce on its waters" is "as broad as the needs of commerce." Navigability is only a part of its domain, for "flood protection, watershed development, recovery of the cost of improvements through utilization of power are likewise parts of commerce control." The decision tends to raise the question as to what sort of governmental agencies should control the nation's watersheds. It is obvious that normally streams of any size concern more than a single state. Therefore such questions as water power, pollution, irrigation cannot be left to independent action by various states along the river bed. The Supreme Court decision should heighten the tendency to put such problems in the lap of the federal government. But these are not the only alternatives. Would the people involved and the nation as a whole be better served by the establishment of regional groups of interstate water authorities? Thus far interstate compacts have not been particularly productive. The TVA seems to indicate that the federal government itself can set up effective regional agencies. Several divisions of the Department of Agriculture indicated four years ago in a tiny but expert volume, "Little Waters," that the whole water question really depends on the right use of the "raindrop and the rill." Americans are only beginning to find out about the importance and complexity of our watersheds. It will take time for the best means of conserving and developing these national resources to crystallize.

The French Crisis

Laval and Flandin

HITLER AND PETAIN, Laval, Abetz and Flandin, in the succession of dramatic incidents surrounding the return of the ashes of Napoleon's son from Vienna to Paris, seem to us so many characters in search of a plot. Their thoughts are secret, their words not transmitted, they are men, not mimes, and we who watch them act can see no meaning in the play.

Let us forget the return of the ashes. Marshal Pétain's effort to save what may be saved of France is conditioned by the fact that the war is

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not yet won by the conqueror. In France Hitler can exert force, yet force alone would lose for him much that he needs in France. He is faced with the necessity of avoiding chaos in France and, presently, with the need of measuring the consequences on French opinion of the Italian reversal. The capacity of a conquered country for spiritual and practical resistance is not a static quantity. It increases or diminishes, influenced by foreign and national factors. Hitler is not dealing with an inert mass. His control must take a changing reality into account. The conquered and the conqueror are locked together in the necessity for continual Franco-German negotiation. Pétain uses one man after another as he would use one argument after another. But now that parliamentary government is suspended we no longer know what forces of opinion these men represent. We know that Flandin, in the past, represented big business and cooperation with Germany—but also with Britain and the United States. In the past Laval represented cooperation with Italy. But with the fall of the country, and in Laval's case with the present Italian situation, we have no way of knowing what policy they now are advising and what French groups endorse their action. Perhaps that is why Marshal Pétain is calling a national assembly. In a country with a long tradition of popular influence on affairs it is necessary that policy repose on the nation's will. We believe that Marshal Pétain desires to be the instrument of that will.

Forum

WITH THE late Lord Lothian's statement it had seemed that we should have a little respite from indecision on the food-for-conquered-Europe question. For some weeks at least the official British and American attitude seemed to preclude any positive action. But it did not preclude it for Dorothy Thompson. Scarcely a week later she devoted an entire column to its discussion. "Mr. Hoover's plan for food relief for the countries subjugated by Hitler has this appeal: It gives us another opportunity to salve our consciences by means that entail no risk and no responsibility for any of the major problems of our world. It has the additional feature that certain producers are offered a chance to make money on it. . . . For heaven's sake let us call a spade a spade. This is no great humanitarian effort at all. It's a trade deal."

Let us by all means call spades spades. Let us also impute motives, if that is the level on which the controversy is to be conducted. The trouble with Miss Thompson is that she has been suffering from a case of bad conscience. She is possessed of a very real sense for people, for human values. She actually can visualize starvation. She herself saw in Germany and Austria what it can do, especially to children. She knows. So it was necessary for her to salve her conscience, which she neatly does by finding a bad name for the Hoover plan. It is a "trade deal" (which is horrid) and not a "great humanitarian effort" (which would have been embarrassing).

As far as I am concerned, an *honest* trade deal can itself be a humanitarian effort. So Miss Thompson's specimen of nominalist reasoning does not salve my conscience. Whether the Hoover plan is escapism or is a trade deal, the evidence regarding Europe and food remains stubbornly unchanged. Our best sources of information (especially the Quakers) report that there will at least be devastating shortages this winter, if not actual famine. We have food to burn. The question also remains the same: will alleviating the distress of conquered Europe greatly advantage Hitler, hurt England? This question is not to be solved by announcing a preference for Saint Paul and Thomas Aquinas to Colonel Lindbergh. It is not honest polemics to hint that those who think a change in British policy would be wise for Britain's own sake are all appeasers, and opposed to helping Britain. I will never yield to Miss Thompson in my detestation for nazism, but I am firmly convinced that the present state of the food-for-conquered-Europe situation is not its state of optimum solution, nor do I think that a long continuance of the present British attitude will make any easier the establishment of Miss Thompson's "real new order based on the cooperative use of all resources, once the nazi program has been halted."

What is worse is that we—not so much the British, who are fighting a war for self-preservation—we will be blamed. We, the United States, Uncle Shylock, who would not even consider taking good money, because he thought that might be too easy a way to salve his conscience.

The problem is not an easy one. The dilemma is terrible, both realistically and theoretically. It is not to be solved by name calling, or lining up First Corinthians against "Mein Kampf." The people who are in favor of some plan like Mr. Hoover's are many of them intelligent and more than "Sunday-service" Christians, who know very well that Hitler would like to stamp their faith out of existence. Among those on your side, Miss Thompson, there are also many Christians, and there are avowed enemies of Christianity. The problem is moral and political. Discussion of it should be kept to its proper levels. Christians disagree.

Let us rather be a little simpler, a little more innocent about such problems, and try to think about them, rather than make them past thinking about by tying them up with a whole mythology of Sunday-service Christians stacking Saint Thomas up against the Lone Eagle and Saint Paul against Hitler, and finding that in the end they prefer the former to the latter. HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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English Mail

Three English Catholics write on the war and on its consequences.

In England Today

AS the struggle of war grows more grim for the big cities of England, we know many American friends are denying themselves to send relief to our homeless; we know too that Americans are helping to defend us. England is a beleaguered fortress and we English people in general and English Catholics in particular want to feel ourselves in touch with our friends beyond the seas.

Just now we are having to use our ingenuity in adapting ourselves to a new way of life, the life of bombardments and air raid shelters; we have had to become gas mask minded. Our townspeople's reactions to the blitzkrieg have hardly been according to Hitler's schedule; we have still in hand a good stock of pluck, humor and resourcefulness to help us cope with the new conditions. "Open as usual," I saw written up over one windowless shop in a well known, bombed street in London. "More open than usual," its neighbor announced. In other words we, the great collective "we," carry on.

This does not mean that our outlook is unchanged; we see the blunders of the past, blunders that have to be retrieved by the endurance of the present, and this response to the most momentous challenge in our history is being made by people who had none of the calculated martial training, the mechanical discipline of the totalitarian states. It is being made by those ordinary people who thronged the tubes and busses, who in a thousand ways were part of a great peace loving, commercial nation which blindly would not prepare for war.

The greater part of the nation is now in uniform, be it of the army, navy or air force; behind them are the women in all the many branches of service. There are the factory workers, the transport workers, the Land Army, there is the A.R.P., a citizen army of both sexes which has achieved cohesion in the necessity of the moment. In all this English Catholics share to the full; there is no division between us and our non-Catholic fellow countrymen; our specifically Catholic organizations in one form or another are all contributing to the general war effort; our priests are out in the streets with first aid and demolition and rescue parties, our nuns are turning their hands to many a new job, many of our churches are being reduced to ruins, many of our convents are lying flat, much of the work of years is being demolished. But . . . we are carrying on. After the war by the grace of God we will rebuild our churches and convents, indeed we will add to their number.

How are we reacting to all this? A good many of our stupid illusions have been shaken, our complacent eyes are being opened not only to the political and economic mistakes of the past but also to the meaning of those vital truths for which we are prepared to fight and die and on which we realize any future peace must be built. We are convinced that our fight is just, that we are fighting for Christian principles. We are confident of victory. We will resist to the utmost not only the threat to our existence as the British Empire but the threat to those values which are the foundation of any true freedom. The nazi and fascist creeds with their slogans of race, of might being right and war a glory, shall never be ours. We will never subscribe to a monstrous semi-deity called the State which proclaims its priority over all individual rights; we believe in ourselves as rational, responsible, spiritual human beings, children of God. We will adopt neither the nazi, the fascist nor the communist tyranny.

Perhaps some of us are beginning to realize the enormous tasks ahead of any such refusal; we see that what we are really faced with is the supreme task of reorganizing our civil and international life on Christian principles—all of which means Sacrifice with a capital *S*. At present we cannot think and plan much for the future except on very general lines, we are too busy with the present. It is idle today to try and foresee the morrow; the most we can do is often insensibly to scatter the seed for tomorrow in the furrows of the tasks, the questions, the dilemmas, the sufferings of today. Above all we must stand upon our certainties. We have been given a focus for our efforts in the new association of the Sword of the Spirit inaugurated in August by Cardinal Hinsley, and gradually we, the Catholic laity, hope to play an increasing part in the wider and deeper fight for the kingdom of Christ our King. Never have the laity had greater opportunities; never has the need for the cooperation of every layman and lay woman been so urgent as it is now. Never has the lay vocation been more necessary or more splendid; let it not be said of us that the laborers are few.

The variety of our outward work is endless, our efficiency as workers in the Catholic cause in a predominantly non-Catholic country depends of course on our individual spiritual life, on our realization of Our Lord's words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul and with thy whole mind . . . and . . . thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Everything hangs on these words, and as in every other country so too we in England have never accepted them completely as the basis for all our dealings and institutions. To achieve such an acceptance we realize that beside our good will our whole intelligence is necessary. Perhaps we have never sufficiently considered all that is meant by the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and of the grace which flows from God through the human channels He has created for the accomplishing of His will and for the unfolding of His purpose for final defeat of the powers of evil. Our eyes are hardly opened yet to our share and our responsibilities in the formation of the mystical body of Christ, and yet I think it is precisely this truth which the Holy Spirit is revealing to us at the present time. We catch a glimpse of it here and there through the mists in

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which we live, and through all our exceedingly practical preoccupations.

Certainly one of our chief preoccupations must be with our system of education. The upheaval caused by large scale evacuation from our congested cities has revealed not only the insufficient standard of personal cleanliness among children frequenting the State schools, but also the appalling ignorance of a large number of our people concerning the fundamental truths of religion. How can we tolerate this in a nominally Christian country? Can we sit down and rest while many children do not know the meaning of Christmas? Not long ago I heard from a worker at a play center in east London that she had asked a large group of children what was the most important thing in the world today. "Hitler, Miss," came the prompt and almost unanimous answer, but one small voice was heard, "The Cross, Miss." That small voice has got to be magnified.

The solid background of Protestant Bible Christianity has been largely undermined; and yet alongside of so much ignorance and indifference there does still exist in England among the masses a certain trust in the providence of God, a certain leaning toward generosity, kindliness, fair play which is the result, often the unconscious result, of centuries of Christian teaching. The response to the various days of national prayer has been considerable, even if inspired largely by turning to the providence of God in the desire to be "let off." A charwoman was telling me how much her daughter-in-law disapproved of such days of prayer, alleging how invariably they were followed by some fresh disaster. "You let that be," my friend had retorted, "the Lord 'E ain't a speeder like you, 'E likes to take 'Is time, but in the end 'E'll see to it."

"'E'll see to it." Our various formulas embody the same trust as the charwoman's. Often trust is harder than faith, and yet it is only a flower of the twin plants of faith and hope. It has been the shattering of international trust which has helped to bring us to our present pass; to rebuild it will need every effort of Christian good will and common sense. Before that can happen we have to learn all the implications of trust through the "sacrament of the present moment," rich as it is in trial, rich also in consolation. A relatively short time ago we felt so secure in our man-made civilization that with many of us the very words expressing trust in God had become perfunctory. Now nothing perfunctory is of any use, or indeed of any interest. Most of us I think do not feel that the war is "sent by God as a punishment for our sins," and the other often repeated catchword, "Why doesn't God stop the war," passes us by. We answer that given man's free will we see no reason why God should intervene with a miracle to save us from the logical consequences of our human sins and stupidities. We accept His law of cause and effect, we accept the darkness of our understanding in our attempts to fathom those laws, we think that it may be part of His plan to enlighten the human mind progressively and gradually through the stirrings of the Holy Spirit to reveal much that now is a mystery to us. Where no purely logical answer is forthcoming, we find an entirely adequate, a satisfactory answer in our complete trust in Him. And if trust answers our intellectual questioning, it is in trust that we face the conviction that in this war vast evil spiritual forces are unloosed operating in other spheres than ours. It is the "devil who wanders through the world to the ruin of souls"; we are caught in the still vaster conflict of good and evil of which our humanity is a part.

Only trust can meet our predicament. "Though Thou slay me, yet will I trust Thee," said Job; today we are in the privileged position of being able to say the same. We hear the psalm repeating that "he will overshadow thee with his shoulders and under his wings thou shalt trust." We see how the Egyptians must have felt this when they represented Horus encircling and protecting the head of the Pharaoh with his wings. We now know what that trust can mean during many a bombardment when we also know the "terror of the night." At this moment we are learning to trust all to God daily and hourly—ourselves, those we love, our cause, our country, all the present, all the future. If unremitting toil must be the program of English Catholics, it will be faced in the spirit of unlimited trust. Many barriers are being broken down by war-time conditions; people who before were hardly conscious of each other's existence are conscious of it now and of the urgency of many social problems. Our present fusion with our non-Catholic fellow countrymen is our great opportunity for spreading Catholic ideals and reaching out to Catholics of other countries in greater understanding of our common needs.

I have wandered far from my intention merely to tell American friends how some of us feel in our present crisis. When all is said, our effort can best be described in our determination to "carry on" in every field of English life. We hope and believe that with God's help we may cast seed which tomorrow may grow and bear fruit for the general good of mankind.

NESTA DE ROBECK.

Beneath the Bombardment

I DO NOT want to be guilty of the affectation of pretending that being bombed is merely amusing. That would be indeed a heartless folly. But nevertheless it is my impression that the general tendency of foreign journalists is greatly to exaggerate the horrors inflicted by aerial warfare.

It is not infrequent to read such phrases as, London is facing horrors unparalleled in history. If we allow our minds to run over the horrors that history has seen—the sacks of cities, the massacres of populations—it is evident that such language is a very wild exercise in rhetoric. Compared with much that has happened in the past, aerial warfare is a very mild inconvenience.

Nor, I must confess, does it seem to me so wholly inhumane, once granted the preliminary inhumanity of having a war at all. Its casualties are completely trivial in comparison with those of the trench warfare of the last war—6,000 odd killed after a month of the most intense bombardment of which science is capable, to be compared with the 400,000 casualties of the few days' blood-bath of the Somme. It is true that there are some who would have it that it is an exceptionally barbaric form of warfare because it attacks non-combatants as well as soldiers, and they can indeed quote eminent Catholic authorities in their support. Of such authorities I do not wish to speak without respect. Yet they, too, were non-combatants. And in general justice I have never been able to see any particular reason why those who have all the boredom of fighting in a war should also have the unpleasantness of being killed in it. A reasonable division of disamenities seems eminently fair. Just at the moment soldiering is by far the safest profession in England, and that I must

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confess, speaking as a civilian, seems to be just as it should be.

Obviously there is one reservation to be made to this proposition—the reservation that the casualties of air bombardment may fall as easily upon women and children as upon men. As for the children, there is not really so serious a point as it may seem to the sentimentalist. There has been most adequate opportunity to evacuate all children, and in rural areas the casualties are so enormously less than those of the normal incidents of civilian life, such as automobile accidents, and automobile accidents have themselves been so greatly reduced by gasoline rationing, that statistics have shown that on balance children in rural areas are far safer under a blitzkrieg than in conditions of peace. On top of that, if I may judge from the experience of my own children and that of others whom I have seen, the psychological effect of having a sort of sense, however illusory, of a share in the general risks of the day is good. In the last war we who were then boys and girls had a kind of meretricious, second-hand experience of war. We read about it without ever seeing it. The effect was wholly evil and helped to produce that flabby generation that passed its silly resolutions at the Oxford Union about not fighting for King and country and which had in its turn so large a share in the responsibility for the present war. The other day, on the other hand, I arrived home to find that an air-battle had just taken place over my house and that a German airman had landed by parachute some three miles away. My son, aged three, described with ecstasy the spectacle of the battle—which is indeed a spectacle enormously more thrilling than any of the encounters of sport—and the swaying of the descending parachute to and fro in the wind. It was a thrill wholly greater than any other of his life and one that he will never forget. It will, I think, save him forever afterwards from that inordinate fuss about the incidents of mortality which is one of the most tiresome of human traits.

The case of women is certainly not as simple as that of children, and it must be conceded as an evil of aerial warfare that casualties are distributed very evenly between the two sexes. Yet on balance the basic truth is that casualties in aerial warfare are enormously less than in any other form of warfare ever invented, and as they are spread out over the whole population, the odds against any individual suffering are so enormous that no one need live in any serious apprehension. Nor am I at all sure that the wholesale accusations of inhumanity against the Germans are quite justified. It is true that an inordinate number of hospitals have been hit, but I cannot bring myself to believe that this was done by the Germans of deliberate intention. I am willing to credit the Germans with any degree of inhumanity, but the deliberate bombing of hospitals seems to me so completely pointless. On the other hand by far the greater part of the bombing of London has been upon the business quarters in the City and during the night, when there is nobody there.

I am most sympathetic with all arguments concerning the futility, and of course also concerning the wickedness, of war. But the great mistake of the pacifists is, it seems to me, to exaggerate its unpleasantness. It is not a question of what people ought to do, but what they do do. People vary enormously. To some, it is true, war is all horror, but by no means to all. It may well be a commentary on the futility of our peacetime life, but the fact remains that a good number of people, while not shutting their eyes to so much that is horrible in modern war, do at the same time find a good deal of pleasurable excitement in it. When there is a night without bombs, it is in a way a relief, but at the same time one has a curious feeling of emptiness —of something missing. So what with one consideration and another I do not know that the people of London need all the sympathy so generously offered them.

But what impresses me much more about the blitzkrieg than its inhumanity is its complete futility. It is not that it does not succeed. It is that, for all the very real incidental inconvenience which it causes, that inconvenience is not of a nature to give it the least chance of succeeding. The importance of the aerial weapon in warfare is self-evident. As an auxiliary to a military offensive—as a sort of long-range artillery—it is, as the experience of Poland and elsewhere has proved, immense. But as a weapon employed independent of the military it is a futility. The reason is clear. Its successes are chancy and sporadic. Every now and again, once amid many failures, a bomb perhaps destroys a piece of railroad line. Supposing that the attacker can do that on the very day of a military attack, the importance is clearly immense, for the enemy is deprived of the use of this vital line at the very moment when it is supremely necessary to him for the moving up of supplies and reinforcements. But to destroy the line at a time uncoordinated with any military operation is clearly of very much less value. For the railroad lines can be very quickly mended. The most that it does is to throw communications into some confusion for a day or two—a minor gain. It may be argued that it is possible to bomb communications again and again and again and thus create a permanent dislocation. Obviously it is possible to do that, if we presuppose an enemy who has no defenses. But against an enemy who can defend himself it is only possible to do this at such a large expenditure not only of lost planes but also of missed bombs that the expenditure of the attacker is certain to be enormously greater than the damage to the defender. No one can be such a fool as not to want to bomb military objectives if he can. Indeed it is almost the definition of a military objective that it is something which you would want to bomb. The question is not whether you aim at them but whether you hit them.

I think then that the whole blitzkrieg against England will be judged to be a gigantic psychological blunder by a nation of many talents, but not notably possessed of much psychological understanding. Its main effect has been to destroy the last vestiges of that in which lay the Germans' major hope—a defeatist mentality and a readiness to compromise with Hitler. If the Germans really ever hoped that their blitzkrieg would even facilitate the invasion of England, they certainly have already been proved very firmly wrong. It is of course just possible that from the first their intention was quite a different one—just possible that they never intended an invasion and that all the invasion talk was but a bluff to keep troops in England, while they struck their decisive blow. If that was the intention, then it is not yet publicly known whether they succeeded in it, and the future has still to show whether their ruse will bring them any final good.

CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS.

Wanted—A New Declaration!

FROM the beginning of the war the British have been intensely wrought up about the problem of war aims. The Labor Party in particular has pressed time and again

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for a clear declaration on this matter. The rather obvious reply has been given that our war aim is to defeat the enemy. This attitude was aptly summarized some time ago by one of our Ministers, who, in answer to the question "What are we fighting for?" replied that the questioner would soon find out if we lost.

Such retorts are natural enough, and utterances made from time to time by certain of our public men have tended rather to invite them. A British defeat would have consequences such that even the most non-privileged of British nationals would find his last state not only worse, but unspeakably worse, than his first. There is in Britain today none so poor that he has nothing to defend.

When all this has been said, however, the case for stating war aims is very strong and there is here a growing volume of discussion now going on concerning this matter that cannot possibly be dismissed as an irrelevancy or a waste of time. What those who insist on engaging in it really have in mind is, I think, the truth expressed by Saint Thomas when he said, "All who make war seek through war to arrive at a peace more perfect than existed before the war." Clearly in such circumstances debate is vital and may indeed be accounted an essential part of our war effort.

Nay more, it is becoming recognized that certain parts of the general war aims discussion which strike many as being beside the point are not beside the point at all. For instance it is clear that an internal explosive condition in one country is bound to have repercussions in others. Hitler's own career as a child of the great depression gives ample proof of this. Those therefore who are pressing for a great measure of internal social justice are concerning themselves with something that will profoundly affect the whole post-war settlement; for the establishment of economic justice in one country will tend to induce others to follow its example and so create that like-mindedness which is undoubtedly the most powerful factor in the sustaining of peace.

There is, however, one aspect of this truth to which people over here are rather uneasily waking up. It is that there has hitherto been a tendency to think far too much of the purely European aspects of this matter. Plans for a European Federation or for a United States of Europe which seems the natural outcome of this "like-mindedness" argument have been plentiful enough. But they tend to ignore the fact that Britain, which is after all an important member of the European family, has a dual character. Britain is both of Europe and not of Europe, and has an enormous complexity of relations to millions of non-Europeans under her rule. Federation enthusiasts over here are becoming uncomfortably conscious of the fact that most federation schemes are vehemently rejected by Britain's subject populations. They are rejected because they conceive of the subject races being allotted to various trustees or put under some collective European organization, and this is precisely the thing that the subject races of Britain will not have at any price whatever.

Professor Basil Matthews puts the matter very succinctly, insofar as it relates to Africa, when in his "We Fight for the Future," he says:

> If this issue were put today to the leadership of the African peoples under British rule in all parts of that continent, there is little question that they would refuse to come into any Federal Union except as elements in the British Commonwealth. They would not and could not come as independent members of that Union. Numbers of African leaders have already expressed their fears about European Federal Union if it is to be put in control over Africa. They fear that the Africans would (if internationalized) simply lapse from the British citizenship that they do really prize into a depersonalized vast vague body that might get under the thumb of harsh domineering executive officers from some European nation. They do not want to be attached to a United States of Europe. The Africans fear that this might become a new and more powerful conscienceless white imperialism.

The feeling that British rule, with all its human weaknesses and shortcomings,* nevertheless gives a boundless hope to those who are subject to it is shown by a vast and quite spontaneous outpouring of feeling which has time and again amazed our Colonial officials. I could quote many passages in support of that statement, some of which are all the more touching because of their grotesque manner of expression. Here is a letter from an African in Lagos (Nigeria):

> Eagerly wishing to be enrolled daily in the "How to defend and offend" with arms, I offer to enrol as a cadet in training. I have read Form 11. I am a short-handist (Pitmanite). Guns sneezing, bombs howling, and shells cricketing stand me no menace, for I know my mortality, and for Providence God is passim. Should my appeal receive immediate attention, let me come now to avoid rawness, brownness and untold inconveniences that may ensue from ignorance in the use and avoidance of arms.†

It is not surprising that such people should feel they have something to fight for. The tendency within the last quarter of a century has been toward equality of status between all men subject to British rule, of whatever creed or color. There are at this moment Civil Servants who are the subordinates of Indian Ministers; Maori Cabinet Ministers have sat in the New Zealand Parliament and an Indian has sat in the British House of Commons, and the time is not far distant (a matter of perhaps a generation) when an African will take his place not only beside a British official but in some cases quite possibly over him. Many obstacles have to be overcome and many difficulties resolved before full equality of status is granted to every people and every individual subject to the British crown. India has not yet achieved Dominion status, largely because the age-old clash between the Mahommedan and the Hindoo makes stability impossible, but the trend toward it is unmistakable.

What is the logical upshot of this? As international cooperation grows more positive between the constituent members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, bodies will come into being on which Hindoo, African and Malayan assist in the making of decisions binding on British people of European stock. Prophecy is always dangerous, but unless every trend now in existence is to be reversed, unless every undertaking of the British Government is to be refuted, that is what lies just round the corner.

Will it be easy to fit the national groups of Europe into this unprecedented Commonwealth? France, Holland and Belgium have long experience of colonial development. Republican France in particular was distinguished by her

*Such for instance as the expropriation of the native from his land in Kenya, a policy which stands in marked contrast to the administrative principles followed, say, in West Africa by the British. †Quoted by Professor Matthews.

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liberal and broad-minded policy in the treatment of subject peoples, a fact which has been made a reproach to her by the Germans. But what of Germany, Italy, of race-conscious Hungary, of Poland and the Balkans, of Scandinavia and the Baltic States?

And yet, what other solution is there? Europe was once more or less an organized unity. It was afterwards, until September, 1939, a perilously unstable equilibrium which will never now be reconstructed. Neither can it ever again become a united organism. Europe today cannot feed itself or supply itself with indispensable raw materials. If it is to be a unity it must be something enormously greater than itself. Today the conception of Europe is either a convenient tag for tourist offices or an expression of the civilizing and unifying spirit of Christendom, which knows no territorial boundaries. All other interpretations have ceased to be applicable. Hitler's talk of a New Europe is contradictory and nonsensical. It means a new World Dominion or it means nothing.

Here then is the measure of the problem. The alternatives are simple—the world imperium of a "master race," or some world-wide system of international cooperation. Whether this last is legally and technically a federal system is unimportant. The important point is that this latter alternative, which is the one we all here ardently desire, cannot possibly come into being without a realization of the unity of the human family and of the mystical dogma of human equality, new and vivid beyond anything in the past.

There is much going on over here; there is perceptible ferment of which this idea is the essential yeast, though owing to a lack of intellectual discipline, it is not always brought out as clearly as it should be. For instance a recent effort of Mr. H. G. Wells can in no wise be disregarded in this connection. I allude to his formulation of a set of principles which he groups together under the rather repellent title of "The Rights of Man." It has been my own task to protest against the ridicule which certain Catholic writers have poured upon this effort. True, Mr. Wells has rather "asked for it," for whenever he touches on the Church he displays a combination of ignorance and bad manners which is often very hard to bear. But that is no reason for belittling this effort which, though startlingly faulty in places, is nevertheless conspicuous for its essential rightness of direction. For that which animates Mr. Wells, though he may himself be unconscious of the fact, is an overwhelming sense of the value of human personality. Mr. Wells is to be congratulated on having seen that this, and not some piece of dead political machinery, is the key to the whole thing. He has also probably realized that the heart of our quarrel with nazidom is just this one idea.

It is this idea that also underlies much related effort which often tends to be misunderstood. For instance a book called "100,000,000 Allies—If We Want Them," which recently created something of a stir, is really in my view animated only by this conception. "Scipio," as its author styled himself, pleaded for a more intelligent use of the thousands of refugees now in this country (many of them have actually been interned as alien enemies) to act as dissolvent agents and spiritual saboteurs of the Hitler régime. "Scipio" wished Britain to be the home of a true revolution which these underground workers were to interpret and proclaim on the Continent. As to the nature of this "revolution," Scipio is a little vague. Some of his critics have interpreted it as communism which, as they rightly point out, would be rather more distasteful to such countries as Holland and Belgium than to anybody else in the world. Hitler is already giving them all the communism they want. But I think what Scipio is really driving at is some powerful reaffirmation of this value of personality which is after all the essential anterior condition to the building up of social justice, and which is at the same time the antithesis of all that Hitler stands for.

But the question is whether we have sufficiently realized the implications of such a faith. Have we, for instance, grasped the fact to which I have already made allusion that race and color prejudice must ultimately be as powerful obstacles to any stable order in the world as Hitlerian power politics. If a recognition of this is not sufficiently lively within us, it is that we have not yet been sufficiently imbued and illuminated with the central idea.

Through the courtesy of the *Catholic Herald* I am endeavoring in this part of the world to rouse discussion on what I call a "Chart of Human Value" capable of being accepted by every person of every creed which subscribes to our central principle of personality value.* Why personality has value we Catholics know, but it is a fact that there are millions who though they may not be able to explain their beliefs nevertheless accept the doctrine. Here is the preamble of the "Chart':

> Since the purpose of every just war is to create a peace more perfect than existed at its outbreak, the formulation of the principles of such a peace is a necessary part of the prosecution of such a war, and since peoples must accept responsibility for the acts of governments which they either choose or endure it is the duty of all men to concern themselves with this matter.
>
> All durable peace must repose upon concord. But we believe that no concord is possible unless men subscribe to the doctrine commonly called "the equality of men." This means that the human family is one and that all belonging to it have, irrespective of race, color, aptitude or even moral character, an absolute value which cannot be measured by any standard other than itself.
>
> Man therefore having this value, it must be the end of all legislation and all economic activity to enable each man in every place to develop to the utmost his faculties and powers of perceptions and so attain his fullest possible stature.

The idea of this "Chart"* is to reaffirm the value of man as a first premise and to set down the various rights to be deduced from it, rights that men may claim as men. I am no doubt doing this work very clumsily and badly, but I am convinced that it is only on some system of affirmation, if it can be made on a world-wide scale, that the structure of concord can ultimately be erected.

The more the idea is worked out the wider will be its appeal, for millions already subscribe to that which flows from it. From the value of man flows the need that every man should be given the conditions essential to the full growth of his faculties and perceptions and from this his right to economic security, freedom and immunity from unwarrantable molestation. From this also his right to create further value through parenthood. There you have the branching of the tree, there the framework within which exact definition is needed, there the outline which this "Chart of Human Value" is seeking to fill in.

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*Some critics dislike the expression "Chart." An alternative title suggested is "A Declaration of Human Inheritance," but this is long and cumbersome.

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The beliefs underlying this scheme are not humanitarianism which exalts man as a god. On the contrary, they repose not so much on man's completeness but rather on his incompleteness and on his need for completion. They are in perfect harmony with the view that he cannot attain to full completion through any human agency, yet they appeal to an instinct common to civilized decent people the world over. It is the task of the hour to make them articulate and develop them to their logical conclusion, and set them down in some clear, explicit and simple form.

It is quite possible that some such efforts are already being made by you in America. May I very humbly (in the full knowledge of my own unworthiness to make such an appeal) beg you to intensify them. The time for comparing notes will come later.

You have already shown your eagerness to aid our cause. There is here a work to be done by means of which you can give tangible and concrete aid to that cause for which this country is in her heart of hearts in arms. Every just war is a war to end war, its purpose is not merely to bring an end to itself but to bring to being an end to war, and this remains true even if those who wage it know that it will be followed by other wars. A just war must move the world at least one step forward in a constructive process, even if it sets but a single stone on the edifice of justice. In the planning of that edifice every mind and every will can cooperate.

I have been through the disillusionment following on the great conflict of twenty years ago. Yet now more than ever do I believe that our civilization is purging itself and that the possibility of a new and happier order for mankind lies ahead. Writing here in this battered and beleaguered city I am filled by the thought with new vigor and illumination. Much travail has to be undergone, much suffering endured before that heartening hope becomes a reality; but in mind and spirit the work can already be begun. The time for foundation laying is now.

J. L. Benvenisti.

Dakota Blizzard

By T. D. Lyons

To the West, to the West, to the land of the free,
Where the mighty Missouri rolls down to the sea,
Where a man is a man if he's willing to toil,
And the humblest may gather the fruits of the soil.

WE HAD a new brand of excitement at my father's Big Place southwest of De Smet in the fall of 1887. My two older sisters were members of the confirmation class of Father Ahern's Montrose parish, and Bishop Marty had announced that he would administer Confirmation early in November. My mother had great plannings for attendance at Mass on All Souls and All Saints. My mother and the girls, of course, needed outfitting. And one day there came out from the Redstone Mercantile Company one of the triumphs of modern science—a new sewing machine. With it came bales of material from Marshall Field's at Chicago, and Mrs. Pooley, an English dressmaker, took charge of the entire proceedings amid much enjoyable din and bustle.

But, as the poet aptly says, "Man was made to mourn," and the last week in October, a regular January snowstorm struck the Big Place making all thought of the trip to Montrose impracticable. The disappointment of my mother and the girls was so intense that my father sensed the need of an immediate remedy. He rented the Walker house in Redstone and brought the news that Bishop Marty would administer Confirmation to the class of the Huron district early in January. There were so many heavy, unusual snowstorms that we had difficulty in making even the short move into Redstone. But finally, on the last hay rack load of household goods, kittens, bird dogs and carpets, I perched myself behind George Davidson and slept the entire five-mile ride into town.

The Walker house was a comfortable, two-story structure, differing from the rambling, one-story rooms of the patch-work residence at the Big Place. The greatest surprise of all, though, was the magnificent anthracite (or, as we called it, "hard-coal") base-burner through the isinglass doors of which the red glow of the hard-coal fire lighted up the room after the big kerosene lamp was extinguished.

Father Ahern

Sure enough, in January Father Ahern drove up in front of the Redstone Mercantile establishment and turned his ponies over to one of the clerks. He was giving the final catechism lessons to the confirmation class, and came with my father for supper and to spend the evening. Father Ahern was a cultured, traveled gentleman. He always contributed his share to the entertainment. He could discuss Latin and Greek roots with Judge Baldwin; moose hunting in the Adirondacks with Frank Ward, a Watertown, New York, banker; statesmanship with Judge Edgerton (later the president of the constitutional convention); and philosophy and theology with John Ireland, Archbishop of St. Paul. Father Ahern was a graduate of Louvain, and had enjoyed the acquaintance in Paris of the witty "Father Prout," the author of the "Bells of Shandon." He customarily conversed with Bishop Marty in French. The Sioux Falls politicians were amazed at his knowledge

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of the forces back of the Democratic National Convention at Charleston which prevented the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas and brought Abraham Lincoln into the presidency. Judge Edgerton had been a delegate to that convention from Minnesota, under instructions to vote for Douglas. But with the aid of Caleb Cushing, the presiding officer, he managed to switch his vote to Andrew Johnson of Tennessee.

The Confirmation had been set for the first week in January, but the weather was so cold that Bishop Marty sent word that it was postponed until some day in the second week, and that he would arrive by sled when he could. As Father Ahern's visits to our home were of nightly occurrence, my father was prevailed upon to tell the company the story of his experiences in the South, immediately following the War, when as a boy of nineteen he was foreman for Ross & Kilbourn in their lumber camps on the White and St. Francis Rivers. Their business took him to New Orleans, where he contracted the "yellow jack." His great problem was to get on a steamboat going back to Memphis. The doctor told him that the quarantine regulation was that anyone able to walk across the gangplank, unaided, was accepted as a passenger, but that if he needed assistance he would not be allowed to come on board. The doctor mixed him a powerful quart potion of whisky and quinine, of which he drank liberally, and succeeded in walking on board, keeping the quart bottle conspicuously sticking out of his pocket. The steamboat authorities thought him slightly intoxicated and did not wonder at his going immediately to his berth, where he remained until Major Ross met him in Memphis.

Reminiscences

Finally, of course, my father was induced to tell the story of his bringing the wagon train from Burr Oak, Iowa, to Prairie Queen, Dakota Territory, in the early '70's. The company was amused by the handbill which my father had saved. This had been distributed among the pioneers of the wagon train at Luverne, Minnesota, by representatives of a Nebraska Improvement Society in an effort to bring the settlers into Nebraska. It bore a rather startling title: "GET YOUR HEAD SHAVED TIGHT IF YOU ARE GOING TO DAKOTA," and continued, in a monitory tone, "WARNING: DAKOTA TERRITORY is not safe for settlers. At least 100 settlers have been murdered by the Indians, the cruel and vindictive Sioux, within the last twelve months. If you escape the Indian's tomahawk, the hot winds of summer and the blizzards of winter will just as surely lay you low. Dakota was made for the Indian and the buffalo. Unless you are a buffalo hunter, or a gold prospector, keep out of it." My father told, laughingly, of some of the faint-hearted who wanted to change the course, but he followed the example of Columbus and gave the word to "sail on" to the west.

It was a matter of comment by Father Ahern and the other guests that the season had been an unprecedentedly "hard winter" and that the high winds and the heavy snows and the twenty-below-zero weather were causing suffering to the settlers more remote from the towns. The question of Bishop Marty's arrival was still uncertain. Finally, January 12, 1888, forever after famed in Dakota annals, dawned. No one could have suspected that such an awful night could succeed such a balmy, pleasant dawn. There was a mild south wind blowing, and it was thawing on the south sides of buildings. The exact hour at which the blizzard struck has always been a matter of debate. My father remembered that between 12:30 and 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon, Olaf Norstrom called him out onto the sidewalk in front of the store to see the big herd of cattle which the Ochsner brothers were driving from their pasture north of town to the railroad stockyards—a distance of about a half mile. While they were looking at the cattle, the wind changed suddenly to the north, and a heavy snowfall commenced. The herd of cattle never reached the stockyards, but were dispersed by the blizzard, and more than half of them perished by freezing. It was agreed by all that the blizzard was on full force by 3:00 P.M., and the problem of getting the children home from school was taken up by a council of citizens in the Redstone Mercantile establishment. My father and Olaf rolled out several coils of clothesline rope. These ropes were spliced end to end by George Cooling and Charlie Ochsner, who had served in the navy; and then the committee of ten or twelve men made a rope line from the mercantile establishment to the school house, about three blocks distant. The storm consisted of a high, violent gale, blowing about 60 miles an hour, and the air was so entirely full of small, icy pellets that not only was the sun obscured, and it was as dark as at midnight, but it was impossible for a man to see his hand before his face. The sense of direction was almost useless; out in the storm the wind seemed to whip in eddying circles. The citizens' committee, by keeping hold of the clothesline and guiding on it, brought the children, five at a time, from the school house. But out in the country districts there was grim tragedy. Many of the school teachers were Eastern girls, unaccustomed to the ways of the blizzard. They discounted as nothing more than "tall talk" the pioneer stories of earlier storms.

In a spirit of heroic, but mistaken, judgment, they took their little flocks with them out of the school house in an effort to take them home. The next day when the blizzard abated, more than a hundred tiny forms of frozen school children were

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found, and in most cases the teacher perished with them. My father stayed up the entire night—going out into the yard frequently and hallooing to attract the attention of anyone who might be lost and wandering in the storm. There were several cases of men frozen to death going from house to the barn to feed the stock. Nearly everyone lost in the storm walked in a circle, unable to retain any sense of direction. Finally a feeling of delicious warmth and drowsiness would overtake the unfortunate one, and he would topple over to a death by freezing.

Exceptions

Tim Lenihan, the famed buffalo hunter and Indian scout, was an exception. He was walking from his ranch, three miles from St. Marys, to get his mail at that hamlet when the storm struck. Realizing the danger, since he had been in some of the earlier blizzards, he kept cool, and by an effort of the will kept from walking in a circle. He kept himself moving in order to keep from freezing to death, and when the storm abated, 24 hours later, he found himself on a 65-foot snowdrift, in the principal street of Madison. He seemed none the worse for the exposure and the severe physical effort.

Lige Green, another buffalo hunter, did not fare so well. He was caught in the storm too, and had the same gift of retaining his sense of direction. He was an older man than Tim, and about 6:00 A.M. on the morning of the next day, as he judged, he became badly fatigued. He dug out a snow-cave in the side of a tremendous drift, crawled into it and laid down and was, as he said, "as warm and snug as a bug in a rug." But the next afternoon, when the blizzard ceased and the wind went down, the temperature was 40 degrees below zero. The warmth of Lige's body had melted the snow, and his clothing was wet through. He felt he could not stay in the snow-cave longer and set forth. A company of settlers, looking for frozen school children, saw a strange sight at some distance in the white glare of the sunlight on the snowdrifts. Something that looked like a post seemed to be standing on a snowdrift. Lige's wet clothes had frozen solid and he was imprisoned by the icy garments as if in a suit of steel armor. When the rescue party found him, he was badly frozen, but his vitality was so great that he lived six weeks, and might have survived longer except for the pneumonia which carried him away.

January 13, 1888, was a day of desolation for Dakota Territory, and the families of the settlers mourned as Rachel mourned for her children, and were not comforted. For many days, sad processions were seen, carrying tiny coffins out for burial in the frozen earth. The great blizzard of Dakota was imprinted on all hearts as an example of nature's violent ferocity.

Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

UNTIL CHRISTMAS, or Easter, in 1941—or, as perhaps we ought to say, until Christmas or Easter of the ecclesiastical year—have come around, it would seem untimely to go on discussing the subject of appropriate greeting cards. Perhaps that discussion has been overdone in this column; nevertheless, in courtesy to several kindly, but critical, correspondents whom it is at present impossible for me to answer personally, who have written to tell me that I fooled myself, and what was worse, fooled some of them by so heartily recommending THE COMMONWEAL'S Christmas cards, let me say a last word or two, till the subject becomes timely again. And yet, will it be the last chance to talk about liturgical things? No. For the majestic cycle of the Christian year rolls forward, starred with holy and lovely names of the shining Saints of God, and its ceremonies bathed in ineffable light, as of the moon and the sun commingled, or alternating—but a more than material moon; a spiritual Sun; as the greater liturgical rites associated with the Blessed Lady Mary and her Son Our Lord are celebrated duly—whether in hidden caverns or bomb-proof refuges, in the lands of the great persecutions; or even more simply in the huts of missionaries in Arctic wilds or tropical jungles and deserts; or with sacred pomp and circumstance in the great cathedrals and monastic chapels in lands untouched as yet by the actual hurricanes of war and revolution, like our own, or south of the Rio Grande and Panama. Liturgical subjects are always timely.

Now for my parting words in this little discussion, which may seem to deal with *trivia,* with arguments about the worth, or the lack of worth, of certain flimsy little cards, colored or plain, marked with new designs of ancient things, with the figures and the symbols of the Christian drama; yet it really deals with great matters indeed. For our Christmas card controversy raises the deeper question whether Holy Church is being served today with zest and originality, as well as negative devotion. Are we drowsily using conventional ways of merely copying and passing on the art that expresses itself in liturgical channels that was created centuries ago by really original artists; all of whom, at the time of their living work, were themselves filled with the zest of path-breakers, and the energies of artists trying to overcome the mediocrity of taste catered to by conventional imitations of still more ancient work; which in its own time had been itself a fresh departure from still more remote attempts to express the beauty and reality of the Church's liturgy in living, not stereotyped forms. All such forms become sterilized, to the point of being rendered commonplace, simply because time *will* move onward (or in a circle, if you prefer, or in ascending or descending spirals, if you insist upon thinking of it in that way). Anyhow, whatever time is, or however it moves, whether in progress or regression from this or that stage of human culture, in art sacred or art profane, it's

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always the same story. One thing is certain: time cannot be fixed, nor can styles and aspects of working in art, for true artists, be fixed to one style alone—not Giotto's nor Raphael's nor Michelangelo's; nor Tom's nor Dick's nor Harry's.

So some of my correspondents tell me sadly that THE COMMONWEAL's Christmas cards disappointed them. They bought them, they say, because they trusted my recommendation and because they desired copies of the beauty made familiar to them in reproductions of the Giottos and the others, I suspect. What they bought trustfully, they add, turned out to be queer and freaky things. Not one of them was signed by any name they could find in any Catalogue of the Christian Masterpieces.

I must reply that, decidedly, they were warned in advance that the editors of THE COMMONWEAL, aided by those sound workers for genuinely living Christian arts and crafts, the experts of the Liturgical Arts Society, were not timidly trying to copy the work of the past (however glorious its products were, and still are, in themselves). On the contrary, they were aiding today's living and striving artists to express their zeal and their faith and their love for Mother Church, and aiding her mission of redeeming minds as well as souls and of invigorating human taste in art and letters as well as satisfying human hunger for the immortal things of the spirit.

And if the disappointed buyers of this year's cards couldn't find in them any Christian beauty and Christian life and Christian originality—originality which stamps all the Church has done and will do in the future, because its very Gospel is that of the Good News of the New Life brought to mankind by its Lord of Life—all I can say is that I am sorry for them, but impenitent for having been the cause of their disappointment. For while all the cards are not equally good and original, all were well worth while.

And next year they will be better, and more American Catholics than this year will be ready, because of their influence, to recognize that Christian art, like the Christian life, never stands still. And it is highly valuable work to foster the living art of the Church. That is better than mediocre copying of stereotyped examples of great things done long ago. Original arts and letters will be among the most potent means whereby our Church will be enabled more effectively to accomplish greater works than those even of the Christian painter or sculptor or musician or architect or mason or carpenter or cement-mixer-and-molder—though these be great workers of great work indeed.

For living Christian art will be the hand-maid of theology, the herald of invitation to mankind to partake of Sacramental food.

It will assist the Church's philosophers, too, more aptly and vividly to convey the intellectual truths which the deeper mystical energies of Mother Church contain, and which it is man's chief business to seek and find and understand, and then—and this is most important of all—and then, to apply in practice. It will aid in the reforming, or remaking, of our social and economic and educational customs and habits and systems, as part and parcel of the one revolution which constructs or reconstructs society. Christianity is one unending revolution against all things that oppress or burden or stupefy the hearts and minds and souls of God's children.

The Introit of today's Mass, of the Third Sunday in Advent, chants the glad tidings of the true meaning of Christianity, and, therefore, of its art and all its other affairs: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice!" And in the first Collect, the Church begs of Her Lord: "By the grace of Thy visitation enlighten the darkness of our minds!" And in the Gradual: "Stir up Thy might, O Lord, and come: that Thou mayest save us!"

But how in this world, or the world to come, may we really rejoice over copies, and not originals, of Christian art—unless, of course, nothing but copies are, on earth at least, possible to possess? How may the grace of Christianity's visitation flow through the channels of the arts of its Liturgy if those channels are clogged up with mechanical reproductions, in a sort of mass-production imitation of what once was alive? How may the Lord's servant, His Church, exert His might through us (save by miracles: and we are taught not to rely on miracles, but to work as if all depended upon ourselves, even if we pray knowing that prayer is work that is more effective) if we are sound asleep in the past, not creatively alive in the present?

Communications

BLOOD FOR BRITAIN

Brooklyn, N. Y.

TO the Editors: I found the unsigned article in the November 8 issue of THE COMMONWEAL, entitled "Blood for Britons," rather curious reading, largely because of the author's experiences after his blood was drawn. He is to be doubly commended on his act, since he apparently is suffering from pernicious anemia, and so also are the other donors who returned from the transfusions "somewhat uncertainly" and with "cheeks . . . drained."

Some three weeks ago, I, with about ten other young people of my acquaintance, donated a pint of blood for use among casualties of air raids in Great Britain. I had been requested by the Red Cross not to have any dinner (my appointment was at 8 P.M.) since the absorption of fatty food, in any form, affected the purity of the blood plasma. Hence, from 1 o'clock in the afternoon until after 9 o'clock in the evening, I took no food except half a cup of plain tea.

The transfusion over (an experience, incidentally, marked especially by the charm and courteous efficiency of the nurses and doctors), I hurriedly dressed to see whether my husband had had as happily calm a time as I. Everything focused with full satisfaction, my brain seemed no fuzzier than usual, and my stomach demanded only the steak I had promised it. I found David gloomily contemplating his hat, while the Red Cross representative smilingly tried to cheer him. It was his second attempt to give his blood, the first having been thwarted in September because of his annual hayfever. And this time,

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while replying to the routine questions put to donors, he had suddenly remembered that years ago, during a trip through the Balkans, he had contracted malaria. He announced this, was thanked for his effort, and found himself, unpunctured, in the waiting room.

Of all of us who went to donate our blood, my husband alone looked less cheerful when we found ourselves on our way toward that steak. We others, who had been privileged to help in this way to assuage the terrible suffering of hated warfare, experienced nothing more alarming than (a) pride and (b) healthy hunger pangs. When the necessary interval of six weeks is up, I am going again, if they will have me. I regret, only, that my blood instead of serving a people at peace, must help heal the wounds inflicted by hatred and greed.

ADELE BERNSTEIN.

TO the Editors: A typographical error occurred in the description of the preparation of plasma ("Blood for Britain—and U. S. A.," December 13). The substance which prevents blood clotting is sodium *citrate,* not sodium *nitrate.*

JULIETTA K. ARTHUR.

FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Your critic of Ernest Hemingway's last book, "For Whom the Bell Tolls," in his joy at recognizing some of the more obvious and physical landmarks of "Hemingway," the author's mental homeland, seems to have missed the enlargement of spiritual atmosphere that to some (and I cannot but think to a majority of his readers) has almost transformed that erstwhile barren land—if one likes to call it so—into one of those regions where, in Stevenson's words:

> Only the mightier movement sounds and passes,
> Only winds and rivers, life and death.

Even though deaf to the rhythm of such movement (and, I may add, to the extraordinary beauty of the English into which Mr. Hemingway converts the Spanish dialect native to most of his characters) one would have expected a critic to betray some sensitiveness to the marked increase in seriousness in this over the writer's earlier books. And what of the *dramatis personae?* Although it is possible to maintain that the character of the hero is imperfectly realized, as a whole there is much compensation to be had in the quality of his reflections, and automatic reactions in the presence of danger and death. While among the surrounding figures — Pilar, Pablo and the Gypsy occur to one at once — there is evidence of a real creative force. Your critic complains of a dispersal of interest where the plot is concerned, yet each incident surely finds its place in a portrayal of the episode that forms the central theme of the story. As to the love affair which he dismisses with the single epithet "Phooey!" I must plead guilty to finding in it a high lyric quality which, if not enhanced by an occasional frankness of expression illustrative of its roots in the soil of ordinary human nature, yet fails entirely to be quenched by such reference.

J. K. PAULDING.

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: So far I have read two courageous comments on Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls"; at least I consider them brave because the critics have had the courage to differ with popular opinion. The first criticism was that of John S. Kennedy in the December *Sign* and the second your own James Vaughan's in this week's COMMONWEAL.

Perhaps I am not a literary connoisseur and for that reason cannot become excited about Hemingway. Maybe it is because I am feminine and he is so over-masculine; in reading his works one can easily conjure the hirsute picture which adorns the daily blurbs about his latest book.

Mr. Hemingway is graphic; he has the ability to convey speed and action in his words; he is highly readable—but—he leaves me cold. Does the fault lie with Mr. Hemingway or me?

ELLEN MCNEILL.

MEDICAL MISSIONS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editors: Those who have seen the notices about medical mission work which have appeared so often in THE COMMONWEAL in the last few years may wonder how they can help in other ways than by donations of money. A few ways suggest themselves at this time. First they can come as volunteers, if they live in New York, and give some of their time to helping with the secretarial work at 10 West 17 Street, New York, and helping to sort stamps or prepare medical supplies for shipment, etc.

Then too, those who have good books which they wish to donate are invited to bring them for the Sisters' library, which they are building up for the use of the community, the Daughters of Mary, Health of the Sick. Any good books will be welcome.

EDWARD F. GARESCHÉ, S.J.,
President,
Catholic Medical Mission Board.

The Stage & Screen

Is It the Fault of the Critics?

THERE are to be three plays which may prove to be more than usually interesting next week, but this week had only one, another feeble Hollywood number entitled "Every Man for Himself," of which the best is silence. What I found interesting during the week was an interview in the *World-Telegram* written by Douglas Gilbert. The interview was with Oscar Hammerstein II, and in it Mr. Hammerstein blames the dramatic critics for the disappearance of romantic operetta. "Reading the critics carefully, I glean from their comments that they approach musical plays as a relaxation from their more serious duties of appraising dramatic plays. And the more rowdy and irresponsible a musical show contrives to be, the better they like it." I fear for once I must ally myself

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with the playwright against some of my fellow members of the Critics' Circle. Many of them, perhaps a majority of them, just won't have a romantic book at all, and they seem to be hugely amused with the book of such a thing as "Panama Hattie," which aside from Mr. Cole Porter's songs, and a few of the principals, I found wearisome—even to the flesh. Now many of the romantic books are pretty conventional, but so are the books of things like "Panama Hattie"—conventional, only in a different pattern. But one thing the romantic operettas did have, and that was charming music, music that touched the heart and, if not the imagination, at least the fancy. The books of most modern musicals derive from burlesque and are dedicated to the Great Goddess Lubricity. Of course Mr. Porter and Mr. Rodgers are both musicians, and if called upon can write melody with the best, but they don't do it, for melody and beauty have no place in super-burlesque.

The truth is that a "Show Boat" or a "Vagabond King" or to go farther back a "Chocolate Soldier," a "Madame Sherry" or a "Merry Widow" are worth a thousand "Panama Hatties." And a little musical killed by critical nose liftings a couple of seasons ago, "The Two Bouquets," was worth at least a hundred. Critical damning of the books of romantic operetta is like the critical damning of the story of "Twelfth Night," which occurred recently in three or four specimens. After all the story of "Twelfth Night" gives an opportunity for poetry and even for characterization; that it is artificial and contrived is surely a very minor flaw in the structure of a masterpiece of comedy. It seems to me that some of our writers in trying to emphasize their sophistication only succeed in making us doubt it. The truly cultivated mind has a sense of proportion which seems too often lacking today; it is willing to accept certain conventions that far more important things may be evolved. Beauty has practically vanished from the Broadway stage, and the result is that its plays are becoming fewer and fewer, and though musicals at the moment seem to flourish, it is in the appeal to a very low element in our nature. I fear Mr. Hammerstein is right.

GRENVILLE VERNON.

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Whoa—or West for the Winter

THREE major studios, this week, show the results of turning their cameras on the Wild West to find box-office profits from entertainments that are neither musicals nor modern romances. *"Arizona"* is a super-Western that tells well what the cinema has told many times before: wagons rolling westward, Indians, mountains, deserts, fighting rowdies and men of vision seeing a new land, shaping the destiny of a new territory. "Arizona" deviates from other big, Wild West films in that, instead of having saloons full of the usual dance-hall girls, it has only one woman—Jean Arthur as the legendary Phoebe Titus, who is "a female army" in herself. Toting gun and whip, dressed in jeans, boots and loud shirts, Phoebe predicts that some day law will come to Arizona—but in the meantime, she sees to it that she gets justice as this 1860 outpost changes under Union, Confederate, then Union soldiers. She's not too much of a tomboy to bake pies to sell at a dollar each or to fall for handsome adventurer Peter Muncie (William Holden, "Our Town's" hero disguised with beard and hairy chest). Jean and Bill have quite a time struggling through the wicked machinations of villains Warren William, Porter Hall and George Chandler. Producer-director Wesley Ruggles spent a lot of money and made a good show out of Claude Binyon's adaptation of Clarence Budington Kelland's popular novel. Although he has included plenty of stunning shots of real scenery and one thrilling cattle stampede, he might have made still better entertainment by speeding up and shortening his long film.

From the introduction to *"Trail of the Vigilantes"* one expects a serious turn-of-the-century story about Night Riders who took law into their own hands as protection against death and violence of marauders who spread their destruction through the West until the Vigilantes themselves became as desperate and bloody as the villains. However, one soon discovers that this exciting picture, directed by Allan Dwan, is kidding movies, especially Westerns. Besides gorgeous views of mountains and expert

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riding, it has more than one film's share of rougher, tougher fist and gun fights, with more chairs and bodies flying through the air, more and faster breath-taking chases. With tongue in cheek, Franchot Tone, as an Eastern special investigator, goes West to find out what it's all about. And with several mouthsful of tongues-in-cheek, lumbering Broderick Crawford, squeaky-voiced Andy Devine and Indian-matador-cossack-cowboy Mischa Auer show him. Warren William turns up again as the dirty villain who is forcing ranchers to buy protection. Through all the old hokum, humorous slapstick and silly horseplay (no pun intended), Hero Tone manages to prove something about Eastern mind over Western matter.

"Santa Fe Trail," in spite of its misguiding name, is an interesting picture. It drags its title in by the heels; only about half of it takes place in the West and is concerned with Errol Flynn, Ronald Reagan and Warner Brothers' other handsome soldier boys, all of whom love pretty Olivia de Havilland. The other half centers around John Brown in "Bleeding Kansas" and in the raid on Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. This half is so well done that the picture comes close to being first rate. Brown, the slavery question, abolitionists are treated with respect and intelligence. Raymond Massey gives an excellent performance as the Kansas abolitionist who spoke with God and ruthlessly carried his Old Testament eye-for-eye vengeance to within a point of madness. Van Heflin also turns in a moving portrayal of a fighter for a cause, a disciple of this man who believed that slavery was the curse of the nation. However, the conviction of the Heflin rôle is weakened when he sells his leader to the Government. Michael Curtiz has directed this drama of the 1850's with fast pace and balance. From the graduation scene at West Point, through the thrilling cavalry charges in Kansas (with Flynn and the boys riding like mad), the battle at Harpers Ferry, right up to the impressive last words of John Brown, the film will hold your interest. Good photography and Max Steiner's music help to preserve the serious, foreboding-of-Civil War mood which is not broken too often by love scenes or soldiers' high jinks.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Books of the Week

How to Read a Movie

D. W. Griffith: American Film Master. Iris Barry. The Museum of Modern Art. $1.00.
The Rise of the American Film. Lewis Jacobs. Harcourt. $4.50.
America at the Movies. Margaret Farrand Thorp. Yale. $2.75.

WHILE it may be stylish to disparage Hollywood, it may also be educational for captious, self-appointed critics to view certain encouraging new products from the world's cinema center—that is, if they can stop carping long enough to see the best side of the industry. "Abe Lincoln in Illinois," "Of Mice and Men," "Pinocchio," "Grapes of Wrath," "Our Town" and "The Long Voyage Home" are a few of the 1940 crop that can stand up against anyone's slurs. Or the sneerers might visit New York's Museum of Modern Art to see the fine exhibit there (until January 5) on David Wark Griffith, the producer-director who did more to advance the art of the cinema than any other man of our time. It is no easy thing to display genius; but the Museum has done a good job with stills, photographs, scripts, posters and documents to convey the importance of Griffith in making motion pictures more than something to see to pass the time. Furthermore, belittlers who really want to be honest about this newest of the arts could, in conjunction with seeing the best films, read some of the books that would give them background and critical standards.

A reliable estimate of Griffith can be found in the monograph by Iris Barry, Curator of the Museum of Modern Art's Film Library. She follows the once-unknown Kentucky trouper from his first movie-making days at Biograph, through his use of innovations that are now accepted as matter of fact (close-ups, cross-cutting, "eye-opener" focus, skilful editing, camera angles, large scale pictures and sumptuousness), through his interest in social problems and his leadership that set the pace for future directors many of whom were trained under him in the filming of such historical landmarks as "Judith of Bethulia," "The Birth of a Nation," "Intolerance," "Broken Blossoms" and "Isn't Life Wonderful?" (these and many other Griffith films are now being shown at the Museum's auditorium). There is no uncertainty in Miss Barry's opinion of Griffith: "Except for Frank Lloyd Wright, no such eminent American as he had arisen in the arts since Whitman."

Lewis Jacobs has a great deal to say about the Master, too (with much more emphasis on details—such as Griffith's unfortunate bias in the handling of the Negro question in "The Birth of a Nation"). Three chapters are devoted to Griffith in "The Rise of the American Film." Which is as it should be, for Mr. Jacobs has written the most comprehensive critical history of US cinema to date. The author establishes his thesis: "the motion picture has developed through the cooperation of scientist, artist and business man," and proceeds to give the story from that eventful April of 1896, when the first pictures were isolated bits of movement, right through to "Walt Disney: Virtuoso." With painstaking research (the book has a valuable bibliography), Jacobs traces the course of motion pictures from their foundations, through their developments, transitions during the war, intensifications after the war, maturity after the arrival of talkies. Through each period, he stresses that films are a commodity, a craft, and a social force; and includes discussion of the artistic, financial, sociological and engineering aspects. Although he mentions actors in covering hundreds of films, he places importance where it belongs—on the directors and their work as the backbone of the art: Melies, Porter, Ince, Tourneur, Sennett, Chaplin (whom he ranks high for his insight and understanding of character, but strangely underestimates as a craftsman), DeMille, von Stroheim, Lubitsch, Cruze and many others including the outstanding contemporary directors. It is regrettable that Mr. Jacobs has allowed some factual errors to creep into his book; but what is still more unfortunate in such a scholarly history is that the author found it necessary to state his conclusions so dogmatically. In several instances, other interpretations might be drawn from his well-assembled facts. Nevertheless this 585-page volume stands for the present as the best source for anyone wanting background in cinema.

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Margaret Thorp writes in the present as she explains what the movies are and why. "America at the Movies" exposes exploitation, premières, glamor (an actress mustn't be so beautiful that the average girl can't imitate her), fashions, influences, double bills and the industry, itself. She investigates the 85,000,000 who go to the movies every week and who have to be pleased. This figure has dwindled lately, but still explains why movies are a great art and also why they're not. She discovers that the attention of the industry is commanded by the wife of Mr. Averageman who earns $1,500 and lives in a town of 50,000. Much of this information, we already have, but it all makes interesting reading, especially in Miss Thorp's bright and appropriately ironical style. The last half of her book becomes more weighty as she tackles reform, art and propaganda. From the beginning, zealots started reforming the movies; now the outstanding reformers are interested in bettering the cinema by improving its audience. Although the author discusses the Legion of Decency with tact and fairness, she occasionally confuses the Catholic Church with its individual members. I can find no proof that the Church tried to suppress "Blockade." "America at the Movies" provides lively material for those who wish to take the movies seriously; and the chapters on the Vampire Art and films with ideas, showing that cinema gives as much as it borrows and is not purely escapist entertainment, are particularly recommended for those who deride this art. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

Old Treasure

Word-Hoard. Margaret Williams. S. & W. $4.00.

THIS IS one of the most important works in the field of English scholarship published this year. I mean it not only reflects the highest credit on Mother Williams's capacity for research and for assembling its results, but it enables the ordinary intelligent general reader to become acquainted with centuries of literature previously either inaccessible or extremely difficult to reach. The fogs and mists that so often cover England metaphorically shroud from English-speaking people the works written on the island from the year One to the year 1066. This is not an over-statement, for I, who have taught English literature for over forty years and have read it for seventy years, have been densely ignorant of that cloudy period before William the Norman. In my graduate studies, I had one year of Anglo-Saxon, merely to know what it was like; and I have forgotten even that little.

Mother Williams, with knowledge accompanied by intelligence, research scholarship accompanied by common sense, learning accompanied by good taste, accuracy in details accompanied by the power of clear statement, has come to my relief.

So before I say another word about the value of the book to readers and students, I take this opportunity to thank her for what she has done for me. This Word-Hoard is a light shining in the darkness; and as Shakespeare remarked, there is no darkness but ignorance.

Let me say to those who are still more ignorant than I, that the language spoken in England before the conquest in 1066 was more unlike the English we speak than Latin is unlike Italian. It is a difficult language for an Englishman or American to learn, as difficult as German. Yet, as it was spoken and written on the island, we whose mother-tongue is English ought to know something about it, although it is certainly not worth learning it.

The first thousand years *Anno Domini* in England are interesting historically, but fearfully confused in the minds of most men and women, even more so than those of the Middle Ages on the continent. Yet when I asked the poet, A. E. Housman, why it was that Englishmen (not Scots, not Irishmen) had written more great poetry than any other nation in the world, he said, "It is because we are mongrels; the mongrel is keener than the unmixed breed." Well, before the Norman conquest (to which single event Freeman devoted seven or eight volumes and then got the main fact of the battle wrong) there was on the little island a tremendous mixture of breeds; and for a ready and easy way to learn who they were and how they got there and by what means, I advise everyone to read "Swords in the Dawn," an entertaining novel (scholarly) published in 1937 by Professor John Beaty.

And to learn what literature was produced on this most famous of all islands before 1066, we turn not in vain to Mother Williams's informing and charming book "Word-Hoard." Mother Williams, in her modest preface, says she has not written a history of that literature or a criticism of it, or even "an exposition of that distant culture. It is an attempt to let Old English literature speak for itself."

No one but a research scholar could have prepared this book; and we should be proud of Mother Williams, for she went to Oxford in 1933 and took First Class Honors with her degree in English literature in 1935. She is now teaching at the Manhattanville College of the Sacred Heart; and I envy her pupils. I wish she could have taught me this subject when I was young enough to understand it. But she has done better through this book; she has brought from under the accumulated dust of centuries this literature and the men who wrote it, has translated it into modern English not merely because of its worth as writing, but as illuminating the background. Let her express her purpose so admirably fulfilled in the pages that follow: "The development of Anglo-Saxon life and thought, and the Scandinavian, Celtic and Roman influences that helped in that development, are told as a consecutive story, into which the poems and prose passages are woven, each in its place. . . . there is need of perspective in this matter, for the literature written between the sixth and eleventh centuries has suffered more from neglect and misrepresentation than has even the literature of the Middle Ages."

What we have in this handy volume, so well printed, is therefore a complete view (not description, but the thing itself) of that Anglo-Saxon literature. Mother Williams's translations are made *as literal as possible,* in order to bring us close to the times and the men that produced the originals.

I wish I could say something that would make a hundred thousand persons buy this book. The deeds of heroism described in that dim and misty past are repeated now on the same island where the ever-to-be-memorable islanders stand firm against the hordes of barbarism, atheism and organized evil. WILLIAM LYON PHELPS.

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PROBLEMS

The Soviet Power. Hewlett Johnson. Modern Age. $2.50.

A TRULY surprising book to be written by the Dean of Canterbury! The Very Reverend Hewlett Johnson was an engineer and a factory owner before he decided to become a missionary. Then he took his degree

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at Oxford, changed his plans, became editor of a theological paper, was ordained in the Church of England.

The first part of the book contains his autobiography, in which he describes his gradual adoption of socialist doctrines. In this part of the book the word "communist" is not used. His attack on capitalism is an enumeration of every evil prevalent in the world today. Capitalism is, to him, a "moral denial of Christianity." There is no light and shade in his picture. Capitalism dominates all life and has produced a world of chaos, injustice and moral and physical degradation. But, fortunately, according to him, there is hope for the misery of the world, and it is Soviet Russia that has brought that hope and already shown the way to realization. The next two books are concerned with the plans and the concrete achievements of the Soviets. He writes in a quiet, conversational way, adducing many facts and figures to support his contention that communism is making one-sixth of the world into a haven of justice and hope and equality. He acknowledges that mistakes have been made and wrongs committed, but these he sees as due either to the cruelty and misery prevalent in Czarist Russia which could not be at once overcome, or to the fact that the capitalist nations of the world acted toward the new régime with undisguised hostility.

His pages are full of glowing accounts of wonders already completed, quite in the spirit of the New York World's Fair Soviet Building. One reads with ever deepening amazement; is it possible that Mr. Johnson regards his evidence as truthful? A glance at his concluding pages of acknowledgements and thanks may supply the answer. His reading seems to have been almost entirely from Soviet publications. But even so how can he, as a minister of the Church of England, support a government and way of life that is openly atheistic and hostile to all religion? The last book in the volume is on "Mental and Spiritual Horizons," and its four sections are: "Towards the Fully Developed Man," "The Most Democratic Constitution in the World," "Love Is the Fulfilling of the Law," "From the Spark of Flame." Comment is almost unnecessary. The fully developed man is described only in terms of materialistic progress. The most democratic constitution of the world decrees that "freedom of religious worship and freedom of *anti-religious propaganda* is recognized for all citizens" and the author evidently sees no difference between the two! Most painful of all the sections is the travesty of Christianity given in his interpretation of "Love is the fulfilling of the law." He ends on the note "change is coming" and "I firmly believe in the triumph of the truth." His epilogue attempts a justification of Russia's deal with the nazis, its seizure of the Baltic states and its attacks on Finland. And Theodore Dreiser finds the book "wholly fair and well intended." We would entirely disagree and condemn the whole book as unfair in presenting a partial, a very partial, picture, and in ignoring every particle of evidence that embarrasses his thesis.

MOTHER MARY LAWRENCE, S.H.C.J.

I Chose Denmark. Francis Hackett. Doubleday. $2.50.

"EVEN the hero of 'The Grapes of Wrath'—how tenderly his murderings were regarded, just two little marked down murders, while the bankers who sent out tanks are juggernauts. War situation between the bankers and the refugee Okies. But does it have to be war?

"The gist of the Danish answer to all this is to be found in the Danish folk high schools. The Okies are tenant farmers. The Danes would still be tenant farmers had it not been for the folk high schools. . . . The difference between a Willkie and an Okie is not feudal. . . . It is a difference in power, and knowledge is power. The Danish Okie went to school."

Francis Hackett wrote that well. Even though I do not believe the second killing was murder; I should probably have done the same thing myself. It is one of the few really good observations in this second rate book. This story about Denmark is the story of a man who went there and fell in love with the Danes because Ireland, in the first flush of national freedom, censored a few books. That they should not have been banned I agree. Probably they should never have been published. But Hackett, true to his *New Republic,* regarded an incident of censorship as the unforgivable sin. Besides, his wife was a Dane and he had wanted to go there.

I think the Danes must be much more human than Hackett paints them. They must have rarer virtues than the homely ones he lays on thick, and they must have more romantic vices than those he all but avoids. He recognizes that he makes slugs of whole classes when he has an Irish character say, "They have no souls." If Hackett could be taken at his word, the Danes most certainly would have had none. I think he would want that. Judging from this book Hackett likes his homely, intelligent people to be devoid of adventure and religion. They must be good people to no other purpose, it would seem, than to supply copy for him. "Do the Irish get up at five in the morning to begin farm work? They may stay up till five in the morning, but they don't get up." I have a suspicion that quite a few Danes stay up till five too.

True, the coops succeeded in Denmark where they failed in Ireland and for precisely the reason advanced by Sir Horace Plunkett, "A cultural movement before the agricultural movement? That was our mistake, not to have had high schools." It is a cardinal principle of the coop movement. Basically, I think Hackett was in love with successful coops, despite, his homely, sometimes exquisite stories of Danish folk. And he had a liberal mad on about Dev's Ireland.

Hackett derives great consolation from the fact that Danish economics and sociology are achievements brought about with no spiritual incentive. He would be terribly put out at Antigonish.

I devoutly wish the virtues of Danish socialism and the tenets of the *New Republic* had never been brought together, even if only in a book. I like his social criticisms, I like his love of the earthy and simple, I like especially his descriptive prowess. But I do not favor becoming sentimental about clean faces, punctuality, the eradication of syphilis and illiteracy. They are conditions to be worked for. I'll save my sentiment for an old grandmother who died among her loved ones instead of in an institution, even a sociologically perfect Danish one. And I want to laugh delightedly at the smudge on a pretty colleen's nose, not run for a social worker. WILLIAM M. CALLAHAN.

CRITICISM

The English Ode from Milton to Keats. George N. Shuster. Columbia. $3.00.

THIS IS George Shuster's doctoral dissertation, of which reports have from time to time reached me that it would prove to be a very solid piece of work. And

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those reports, now that I see the book actually before me, prove to have been well founded. Packed within these 314 pages is an immense amount of information, often of an out of the way kind. But the most surprising thing of all is that this is probably the best written of all Dr. Shuster's many books. Usually doctoral dissertations are abominably badly composed, so that one sometimes suspects that a decent style is regarded as somehow "unscholarly" by those who direct their production. Or it may be that the unfortunate victim is so bewildered by his accumulation of detail, and so wearied by a dull task, that he can do no more than string his stack of notes together. Whatever be the reason, such things are nearly always appalling to read and, in fact, are never read—except by other budding doctors who burrow in them. But this work shows an unflagging zest in what is a really valuable subject. It is with the hand of a practiced journalist that a sound scholar operates.

One of the points made by Dr. Shuster that is likely to be of great interest to Catholics, as well as others, is that "the practice of the Jesuit schools, in which play acting and ode recitation were important educational functions, had a profound effect upon the English educational system and so upon prosodic experiment." If this is true, it is of notable importance. But I wonder, despite the citation of authorities in a footnote on page 58, whether such an influence could have reached England except by way of indirection. The Latin odes of Casimir Sarviewski may be admitted to have had readers in Vaughan, Watts and Coleridge. But it seems to me doubtful whether the direct influence extended further than Watts's powerful though prosodically rough sapphics, "The Day of Judgement."

So, too, I should be inclined to question whether Dr. Shuster has settled the primary problem as to what an ode really is. He remarks that in the seventeenth century "the word 'ode' was merely a fashionable term . . . varied with 'song,' 'hymn' and 'sonnet' as a hostess changes the wine glasses." But perhaps no definition is really possible. The ode, to my mind, is not so much a form as a tone. Just as T. W. H. Crosland found certain lyrics or even passages of blank verse to be abortive sonnets, in which the pattern did not fully emerge, so I believe that odes, as a spirit not fully released, may be discerned in many things not labeled as such. On the other hand I should vigorously deny that the sixteen-line poem by Prior, beginning "The merchant, to secure his treasure," is an ode at all. I recognize of course the Horatian derivation, but that is not sufficient to turn a prettily sententious song into an ode. So, according to the definition, Calverley's jocose "Ode to Tobacco" would have to be accepted as a genuine ode; and this is still more true of Oliver Gogarty's delightfully horrifying "To a Cock."

However, I did not come here to bury Caesar but to praise him. My admiration is ample enough to leave room for a certain amount of disagreement. After all, probably no two people would agree on this subject. There can be no disagreement that George Shuster has given us an intelligent and richly documented discussion of an important phase of literary history. THEODORE MAYNARD.

FICTION.

Embezzled Heaven. Franz Werfel. Viking. $2.50.

NATURALLY the Book of the Month Club feels highly pleased at having chosen this month and for the Christmas Season, a distinctly Christian, if not Catholic, book. A number of the reviewers of "Embezzled Heaven" interpret it as a clarion call for the world to return to religion; they see in it an ardent "testament of faith." This has been heightened by an interview with Franz Werfel in the *Saturday Review of Literature,* in which he affirmed the fact that he is a Catholic. The subject itself is that of salvation. Most of the leading characters are Catholics, at least in name, and a number of them Religious. Yet, despite all this, some readers will find it difficult to agree that it is a deeply Catholic book.

Teta Linek, a Bohemian peasant who cooks for the Argans of Vienna, is the heroine. Her employers live a pleasant, cultured, yet footless life. She herself has a strangely twisted concern for her own eternal salvation, to which is joined the dream of having a young priest, whom she has educated and maintained, obligated to pray for her as long as he lives. This self-centered quest for salvation is the theme of the book. Teta works and scrimps and saves in order to educate and support a nephew for whom she has not the slightest affection and never sees, only to find after years and years that he is a scoundrel. This makes up the great bulk of the book.

Certain literary critics have held that Charles Dickens was an inferior writer because his "Tale of Two Cities" was so unlike the other things he wrote. Their thesis, which is obviously abhorrent to all good Dickensians, is that Dickens was unable to discern his best from his mediocre work. The first two-thirds of "Embezzled Heaven" raises somewhat similar doubts about Franz Werfel, who has undoubtedly written some of the finest novels of recent times. Only in the last quarter, as the football writers say, does "Embezzled Heaven" seem to come to life. For the ailing Teta in her last days goes on a pilgrimage to Rome, and the chaplain that accompanies the tour happens to embody all the qualities she had dreamed for her unworthy nephew. Through the chaplain and the agonizing pain of her illness Teta experiences a religious awakening, and her meeting with the aged and ailing Pius XI is one of the most moving scenes in contemporary fiction.

"Embezzled Heaven" has greater weaknesses as a novel than the strange outlook on life which it presents and castigates. The pallid Argans family lacks fire to stir the reader's imagination, while Teta herself, until the very end, is hardly more than a quaint eccentric isolated in a strange obsession. Franz Werfel's latest book lacks the sweep and fire of "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh," the human warmth of "The Pascarella Family" and "The Pure in Heart," the spiritual depth of "Hearken Unto the Voice." It is for him a minor work, but even in his lesser moments Franz Werfel is superior to the bulk of his contemporaries. EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

Oliver Wiswell. Kenneth Roberts. Doubleday. $3.00.

MOST fiction readers know by this time that "Oliver Wiswell," destined from the first to be a best selling novel, defends the Colonial Loyalist cause and attacks, in an objective manner, the rebels who are more generally known in this country as the "heroes" of the American Revolution.

Just what this book has to make it popular is an interesting question. Since, like "Gone With the Wind" and "For Whom the Bell Tolls," it deals with a war, and since like them it is written from the point of view of the "lost" cause, inevitably reviewers will see the lost cause as one of the explanations of the popularity of each of the three books. In fact, this probably has little to do with

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the matter. "Gone With the Wind" was liked because it was an exciting, panoramic novel which dealt with one of the few remaining romantic traditions in America—the old South. "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is popular for entirely different reasons—because of the literary merit of Hemingway's work, because the theme of the fight against fascism is a vital one in American life and thought today, because people are concerned with what war means to the average person who takes one side or the other and works for the side he is on. The popularity of "Oliver Wiswell" will come from other causes. Kenneth Roberts writes clearly and with competence and yet he cannot be considered a great literary figure or a profound writer. His books can be read by the average reader without any difficulty. This one is filled with adventure, with battles, with suspense and with normal emotional reactions to exciting events. There are many characters, but they are so presented that they can easily be kept distinct from one another and they are not men and women who are themselves too complex or subtle for the reader to become acquainted with. The book is solid and respectable and has enough familiar historical and geographical reference to give each reader the recurring satisfaction of finding in it something he has heard about before. Above all, it is a good "yarn" with all the qualities this word connotes.

RUTH BYRNS.

LETTERS

The Letters of Saint Boniface. Translated with an Introduction by Ephraim Emerton. Columbia. $3.00.

THE appearance of an English translation of the Letters of Saint Boniface will be welcomed by every student of church history. Its value as a source-book for a highly interesting period of history is too well known to demand further comment. The introduction will be found singularly useful in throwing light on several themes which are but briefly touched upon in the correspondence itself. A somewhat fuller commentary would have increased the value of this translation for a wider circle of readers whose acquaintance with this period is less complete than was that of the learned translator. The relations of the Bishop with the Pope and with the temporal sovereign need, we feel, further elucidation.

When Boniface and his fellow Bishops of Germany reproach King Ethelbald of Mercia with his dissolute way of living, the translator evinces surprise that there is no mention of the authority of the Pope, but he fails to attempt a possible explanation. It would seem that an appeal to Rome under such circumstances would be out of place until the reproach by the Bishops had proved ineffectual. The reply of Pope Zacharias to the alleged accusation of simony brought against him by Boniface the translator terms "not very effective," and with some justice, but there seems no reason why the Pope should defend himself before a Bishop under his own jurisdiction.

The fact that the introduction fails to give adequate explanation of such points may, however, increase its value in stimulating the student to further inquiry into the intricate relations between spiritual and temporal authority. The difficulties connected with the reproduction of the formal style of such correspondence are well known to anyone who has ever attempted such work, and it will doubtless be felt that this present translation has solved the problem satisfactorily and in a manner for which Dr. Emerton deserves to be remembered.

ANSGAR NELSON, O.S.B.

BRIEFERS

Roman Portraits. Phaidon Press Edition. Oxford. $3.00.

"ONE merit has never been denied to Roman art, and that is the excellence of its portraiture." What is too often, however, lost sight of is the variety and development of this original contribution by Rome's sculptors, foretokening the cycles of Christian art: from the exaggerated naturalism (copies of wax death-masks) of the Republic; through the "classic" Hellenism of the Augustan age; the impressionism of the Flavian epoch; the renewed classicism under Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, with an increasing tendency toward baroque; finally, the culminating expressionism of the fourth century. Suffice to say that the Phaidon Press "Roman Portraits" lives up to its predecessors in this invaluable series.

Modern Wilderness. William Arthur Babson. Doubleday. $3.00.

THIS IS another of those pleasant, chatty books that does sweetly what Thoreau attempted without benefit of money and modern many things. The locale is the Jersey swamps, and birds rather than mosquitoes are the amateur ornithologist's principal preoccupation.

The Changing Pattern of International Economic Affairs. Herbert Feis. Harper. $2.00.

IN THIS essay Mr. Feis sets forth in a clear and authoritative fashion the thesis that the historical and theoretic separation of economics from politics has rendered reasoning in this field too abstract to be comprehensive. Purely economic considerations, he maintains, have led nations to seek the immediate self-sufficiency of nationalism, thus destroying the traditional harmony of *laissez-faire*. A convincing and easily-followed work by the author of the current classic on international finance, "Europe, the World's Banker 1870-1914."

Winston Churchill. René Kraus. Lippincott. $3.00.

A JOURNALESE and partisan evaluation of England's Man of the Hour—thorough without being complete. The latest biography by René Kraus is little more than a newspaper account of this fabulous career which reflects at various angles of refraction the precipitous course of history since the Boer War.

Political Propaganda. F. C. Bartlett. Macmillan. $1.25.

THIS is the first of the "Current Problems" series edited by Ernest Barker. It is intended for general reading, as are the others in a series prepared by experts. Professor Bartlett examines totalitarian and democratic propaganda and shows how propaganda works differently in different groups. An excellent study, recommended especially to those who think that we should imitate Hitler's method of propaganda if we are to lick him. The author's analysis and reasoning would sober them.

Correspondence of Robert Bridges and Henry Bradley, 1900-1923. Oxford.

SINCE the overwhelming majority of these letters are almost exclusively concerned with discussions of phonetic writing, their appeal will be narrowly limited. Bridges's indices to his poetry and Bradley's to his scholarship in other fields are scanty, almost cursory. And, whereas there is evidence of the personal regard and respect shown for one another by the correspondents, this collection can only hold minor interest for the average reader.

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The Inner Forum

THE SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY is a familiar aspect of parish life in the United States. It was founded 107 years ago by Frederick Ozanam and seven fellow law students at the University of Paris; only one of them was over twenty years of age. It came about through the challenge these zealous apologists of the "Conference of Religion and Philosophy" had thrown at them by the socialists and unbelievers they were trying to controvert. Ozanam himself cited the following as a typical statement of their adversaries: "You are right when you speak of the past; in former times Christianity worked wonders; but what is it doing for humanity today? Even you who pride yourselves on your Catholicity, what are you doing to show the vitality and efficacy, to prove the truth of your faith?"

The students had the most meager resources. The first act of Ozanam and a companion was to give a poor family firewood they had on hand for the rest of the winter. The current practice of taking up a collection among the members began in the earliest days and what the students dug out of their own slender resources was augmented by donations for the articles they wrote for the *Tribune Catholique, Gazette du Clergé*. The first case adopted by the conference resulted in the moral rehabilitation of a family and established as a permanent principle the society's primary aim of the spiritual well-being of both members and those to whom they minister. In the United States today the members extend emergency relief and meet other needs not supplied by public agencies.

The way the Society continues to carry out the original objectives of Frederick Ozanam in all quarters of the globe is indicated by the report just made by the New York Particular Council. For the year ending September 30, 1940, members had made 35,114 visits to 5,225 families; they had obtained 179 jobs for individuals and expended $132,421.89. Special work Committees of the Particular Council had made 1,777 visits to inmates of city hospitals and the Tombs. There are 30,000 laymen throughout the United States today engaged in this work. The Society as a whole meets regularly with the National Conference of Catholic Charities and receives increasing encouragement from the American hierarchy.

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